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FAO CONFEREES DIFFER ON OCEAN'S FOOD POTENTIAL

The attack on the findings of the Woods Hole scientists began with Dr. W. M. Chapman of San Diego, California, Director of the Tuna Research Foundation. He was ably seconded by Dr. Richard Van Cleve, Director of the College of

Fisheries, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington. Dr. Chapman cited several species of fish which are wholesome, tasty and in good supply which are being thrown back into the sea because there is no American market. Specifically he mentioned anchovies, hake and saury. He also declared that there were vast stretches of the ocean, especially the Indian Ocean, which were not being exploited at all. Dr. Van Cleve contributed similar information.

Both were later backed up when a paper by G. Meseck of Germany forecast a catch of 70 million metric tons in 1980.

The position of Dr. Chapman and Dr. Van Cleve was given further support by a recommendation submitted by the official American delegation to the conference. This delegation, headed by Assistant Secretary of the Interior Frank P. Briggs, stated that available information indicated a large potential yield but that still greater yields should result from improving techniques and by increasing the capacity of fresh and salt water environment.

The recommendation asked that the Director General of FAO establish a Working Party of internationally recognized scientists in fishery biology, oceanography, technology and economics to assess more accurately the world potential for fishery production. The Working Party would advise FAO and through it the member governments on the best means of attaining maximum sustainable yield from the world's fishery resources.

There was general agreement at the meeting that in the areas which most need added animal protein were the areas where deterioration of the product was greatest and that also the inhabitants of areas which needed this protein the most were in the poorest economic position to secure it. This posed a double problem of type of acceptable product and economics.

There was some discussion also on the best way in which the rich fish protein could best be introduced into the human body. This revolved around the proposal of giving humans the necessary animal protein indirectly by using fish meal to supplement vegetable protein thereby giving the animal a complete protein which would assure good growth. Considerable discussion was held on ways to make fish protein available to human beings through fish flour or edible fish meal.

Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall opened the conference with a welcoming address in which he said it was the responsibility of fishery scientists to see that the growing population of the world got the maximum sustainable yield from the sea and to do everything possible to help the presently protein-starved peoples secure adequate diets. He declared that sometime in the future fish flour would be in a form which would be as acceptable as fish paste is now. He expressed faith in scientists to meet these heavy obligations.

Dr. D. B. Finn, Director of the Fisheries Division of FAO, also welcomed the delegates. He declared that the objects of the conference were in accordance with the FAO Freedom from Hunger campaign. He declared that he did not expect the conference to "produce last words on the subjects under consideration", but that

it would heighten the interest and thereby stimulate the effort to narrow the gap between what is known and what is practiced.

Donald L. McKernan, Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service's Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, is general chairman of the meeting. Mr. McKernan reviewed the goals of the conference as set forth by Secretary Udall and Dr. Finn and urged the delegates to do everything possible during the 9 day conference to achieve these goals.

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